

Creating High-quality Academic Reform Through Effective Resources
SC C.H.A.R.T.E.R.
SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (SCDE)
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Charter schools have increased steadily since South Carolina enacted its charter school law in 1997. Charter schools have an unlimited potential for growth as the state has no cap on the number of charter schools or their enrollments. As a result, charter school enrollment has increased 124% over the last two years, and the South Carolina Public Charter School District, the statewide authorizer, has become the state's 37th largest district (of 86). South Carolina continues to refine its state-level charter programming and support to foster high quality charter schools. Our charter program aligns with South Carolina's educational goals to assure a quality education for every child, close existing achievement gaps, and offer public-school choice.

South Carolina proposes *Creating High-quality Academic Reform Through Effective Resources* (SC C.H.A.R.T.E.R.) to meet needs identified through the *EDFacts* charter profile, previous CSP grant evaluations, and quantitative and qualitative analyses of charter schools receiving Federal funds. SC C.H.A.R.T.E.R. will 1) Increase the number of high quality charter schools in South Carolina; 2) Increase the awareness and understanding of the charter model in South Carolina; 3) Improve student outcomes for secondary charter school students who are at-risk of not meeting state standards; and 4) Support charter school efforts at sustainability through fiscal responsibility, sound governance, and effective leadership.

Strategies include intensive training and technical assistance to help groups develop feasible, ambitious charter schools, charter applications, and CSP subgrant applications. SC CH.A.R.T.E.R. requires a one-year planning period for authorized charters to ensure that charters, upon opening, will be viable schools ready to foster student achievement. Our plan cultivates charters that serve at-risk students in high poverty areas, target closing achievement gaps (especially focused on gender, African American, and disabilities) and serve geographic areas currently without charter schools. A Leadership Academy will prepare charter principals. All strategies and activities are designed to cultivate statewide understanding and application of a high quality charter as "a financially viable, choice-driven innovation that produces student achievement and stakeholder satisfaction through effective leadership."

Expected outcomes include 40 new high-quality charter schools, 10 new authorizers, greater awareness and support for the charter model throughout the state, improved student achievement, and decreased student achievement gaps. This program meets the purposes of CSP by increasing understanding of the charter model, developing more high-quality charter schools, providing technical and financial assistance for groups to plan and implement charter schools, and evaluating effects on students, administration, and communities. The SCDE will use SC C.H.A.R.T.E.R. to participate in statewide, regional, and national efforts to develop and disseminate best practices on charter schools.

South Carolina requests a waiver of section of Section 5202(c)(1) to expand to a five-year or sixty-month grant period to offer the full range of services under our plan and, with our partners, to ensure the viability, sustainability, and quality of charter schools. To implement SC C.H.A.R.T.E.R., we request \$24,025,795 over the five-year grant period.